



Dying in FAITH.

A
SERMON,

Occasioned by the

DEATH

Of the late Reverend

Mr. STEPHEN JAMES.

by Mr. Grose

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W. Musgrave!





T O

Mrs. JAMES.

Madam,

A S it was in compliance with the Request of Mr. James, which he was pleased to signify some time before his Death, that I preached the following Sermon, so I now publish it at yours. The Nature of the Subject, so admirably fitted to animate the Christian in a Course of Holiness and Obedience, and to administer Comfort under the Loss of pious Relatives, was, I believe, your principal Inducement, in desiring its Publication. The Argument is confessedly noble; I wish it may not fail of its Effect for want of more Spirit and Life in the Management. As to the sad Occasion of this Discourse, you need not be minded that the Dispensations of Providence, however unsearchable they may sometimes be, are
always

The INTRODUCTION.

*always righteous, and wise, and good ;
and this, with the Consideration of that
better World, where all that die in Faith
enjoy the transporting Pleasures of sight,
ought to reconcile you to the Removal
of one, with whom you had so long
lived in the tenderest Friendship, and
in a Union which nothing but Death
could dissolve. May the Memory of our
Friends departed in the Lord lead us
to meditate oftner of that happy Place
and Society, from which all Sin and
Sorrow, and Imperfection, are for ever
excluded, and prove a most powerful In-
citement, to live more as Fellow-Citi-
zens with the Saints, and Expect-
ants of the same Blessedness and Glory.*

I am,

Madam,

your affectionate Friend

and humble Servant,

HENRY GROVE.

HEBREWS xi. 13.

These all died in Faith-----



AND O how desirable is such a Death ! What wise and good Man would not chuse to die in Faith, much rather than to live in the happiest Condition this World affords without it ? He that liveth in Pleasure is dead while he liveth ; he that dieth in Faith, tho' he die, yet shall he live ; yea, he does not so truly die, as pass from one Life to another ; to a pure and perfect and endless Life, from a Life that is mix'd with Death : While he seems to fall by the Hand of his last Enemy, he riseth

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more glorious from that Fall, and, yielding himself a Captive, is more than Conqueror thro' Faith. The Man that liveth without Faith, lives under the Dominion of Sin, which reigns in his mortal Body, is big with innumerable Evils, and, at last, bringeth forth Death. How much happier he, who, dying in Faith, returns his Body to the Dust, that he may receive it free from all Taint of Corruption, and all the penal Effects of Sin, at the Resurrection ! Thus happy were all those divine Souls, whose Faith is celebrated in this Chapter, whatever *Notion* a *vain* World might have of them, or what *Treatment* soever a *wicked* and *ill-natur'd* World saw fit to give them. So many Examples as we here meet with of an heroic Faith, so many Victories and Triumphs are we to remember. *These all died in Faith.* But who were *all these* ? All before-mentioned are primarily intended ; but, as we may very well suppose, not only ; since by Parity of Reason the same may be affirmed of all that follow. The Faith they died in was, in general, that which in the first Verse is describ'd as *the Substance of Things hoped for,*

for, and the Evidence of Things not seen.

Faith here is not oppos'd to Reason, but to Sense. *Thro' Faith we understand that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that Things which are seen were not made of Things that do appear.* By Faith also we apprehend, not only the Existence, but the Nature and Providence of God, a supreme, eternal and most perfect Being, every where present, but no where visible. These Things are plainly out of the Sphere of Sense, but not beyond that of Reason; the same Writer (I mean the Apostle *Paul*, who most probably was the Author of this Epistle) having elsewhere * observed, that *the invisible Things of God, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without Excuse, who knowing God, (or being capable of knowing him by the Light of Reason) do not glorify him as God.* Of these unseen Things Faith is therefore said to be the Evidence, because to him that firmly believes them they have the same Reality, and make

* Rom. i. 20, 21.

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much the same deep and lively Impressions as Things manifest to Sense. Besides which Property of Faith, there is this farther, that *it is the Substance of Things hoped for*; that is, of future good Things, inspiring the Believer with a *confident Expectation* of them, which sets them full in his View, and gives him, as it were, immediate Possession. Such are those good Things which God, who cannot lie, hath promised, and which the Faith of these dying Saints more particularly and intensely regarded; for so, after the Words, *these all died in Faith*, it immediately follows, *not having received the Promises, but having seen them afar off they were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth*. Not in this or that particular Part of the Earth only, in Opposition to *Canaan*; but in whatever Part of the Earth they did now, or might hereafter reside, in Opposition to Heaven. The leading Promise of all was that of the Messiah, the Seed of the Woman, the Saviour of the World; and this, without all Peradventure, ought not

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not to be wholly excluded the Meaning of the Text, being the chief Foundation or Corner-Stone on which the Hopes of the Pious have been built in all Ages. The Settlement of *Abraham's* Posterity in the Land of *Canaan*, is another Promise that makes a considerable Figure, in the Beginning of the sacred History. But neither this nor the former belong so immediately to the Scope of the Words: Not this, 'tis plain, because it concerned not those who lived before *Abraham*, to whom the Promise of a numerous and national Posterity was first made, or after the *Israelites* had full and quiet Possession of this good Land; of all whom, nevertheless, it is said, that *they received not the Promise*, v. 39. Nor indeed, either of them, for this Reason, that the Faith these good Men died in is, by the three following Verses, made to point directly to a future Life, and a Happiness there. *They that say such Things* (namely, that they are Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth) *declare plainly, that they seek a Country; and truly if they had been mindful of that Country from whence they came out, they might have*

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*have had Opportunity to have returned; but now they desire a better Country, even an heavenly: Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, having prepared for them a City. So that it was a heavenly Country, a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God, v. 10. that their Faith was fixed upon when dying; conceiving the Rest which their Posterity should, or which they themselves did, enjoy in Canaan, no otherwise than as a faint Type or Shadow of that everlasting Rest which remaineth for the People of God. I shall only observe farther, that as the Promise of a Saviour was, in Order of Nature, the first, so this of a Blessedness to come was the last: As that supports all the other Promises, so this finishes and crowns them. This * is the Promise which he hath promised us, even eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son. From the Words I shall take Occasion to handle this general Point of Instruction, that*

Holy Men of old all died in the Faith of an unseen Reward.

* 1 John ii. 25. v. 11.

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In speaking to which Doctrine I shall endeavour to satisfy these two Enquiries.

First, What we are to understand by their *Faith* of an unseen Reward.

Secondly, What by their *dying* in this Faith.

First, What are we to understand by their *Faith* of an unseen Reward? It seems to signify these three Things. A full Persuasion of the Futurity of such a Reward. A Preference of it in their most deliberate and constant Choice to any worldly and temporary Happiness whatsoever, and a reasonable Hope of their being in the Number of those for whom this Reward is laid up.

1. This Faith of theirs implies a firm Persuasion of the Truth of a future Reward. They were all of them ready to pronounce as the Psalmist, *Verily, there is a Reward for the righteous*. There is another Life for all Men; there is a Life of Blessedness and Glory for the Good. It is reasonable to think, that earlier Ages resembled the present in this, that there were too many who laughed alike at all Hopes

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Hopes and Fears of an after-state, as groundless and imaginary; and, perhaps, there were more then of this atheistical Humour than there are now: Sure I am, if the Number of Unbelievers be as great now, they are more inexcusable, since the Doctrine of Life and Immortality hath received such an Addition of Light and Evidence, both from Reason and Revelation. But what sensual careless Sinners treated as a Dream and a Fable, the serious and thinking Part of Mankind always reverenc'd as a most awful Reality. They could never be of the Opinion, that Man perisheth as the Beast, the Soul with the Body, the thinking with the unthinking Part, the Part in which Man resembles his Maker, with the Part in which he is upon a Level with inferior Creatures; that Virtue and Piety, when remov'd out of Sight, are as much forgotten of God as by an ungrateful World; or that an Almighty Being hath no better Rewards for Souls that love him, and whom he loves, than such Things as he bestows upon them in this Life, and, indeed, in common upon his Friends and his Enemies.

mies. They could never suppose this to be all the Meaning of God's *having respect to them*, of their *pleasing God*, and of those big Words, that he was *their God*, and *their exceeding great Reward* *. The Significancy and Loftiness of the Language would put such a lean and beggarly Sense quite out of Countenance. *Why was not God ashamed to be called their God but because he had prepared for them a City?* † As much as to say, if he had not prepared for them a City, a Portion more complete and durable than any he gave them here below, it would have been a Reproach to the Friendship, which, in calling himself their God, he professed to have for them. To be the Friend of a King sounds great; to be the Friend of God sounds infinitely greater than to be one's self a King. Whether their Faith all along took in the Resurrection of the Body, as well as the Immortality of the Soul, and a State of Recompences, is not, some may think, altogether so certain. 'Tis very likely that it did; and

* Gen. iv. 4. xv. 1. xvii. 7.

† Heb. xi. 5, 16.

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that, besides a Tradition in the Church concerning this Article of the Resurrection, they argued the same Thing from their special Interest in God beforemention'd : For if the Lord be my God, he is the God of my entire Person, not of one Part of me only ; this vile Body shall fare the better for its Relation to a Soul that is related to God ; and tho' it see *Corruption*, shall one Day be *raised incorruptible*. They knew that the Death of the Body was the Execution of a Sentence past upon Man for the first Transgression, and that therefore, should the Body for ever continue in a State of Death, it would look as if God was not, and never would be fully reconcil'd to them. Concerning some of these ancient Saints we read towards the End of the Chapter, *That they were tortured, not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection.* * These therefore had the Knowledge of a Resurrection. And if these, why not all ? Especially when the Translation of *Enoch* in his Body seems to have been

* V. 35.

design'd

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design'd as an early Intimation of the Nature and Extent of the Happiness reserv'd for good Men in another Life. Of all the Faithful shall *Enoch* and *Elijah* alone hereafter live, and be rewarded, in their Bodies? Reason will not allow us to suppose such a strange Difference as this in the Happiness of good Men.

2. Their Faith of an unseen Reward was attended with a Preference of it, in their most deliberate and constant Choice, before any worldly and temporary Happiness whatsoever. They did not merely talk contemptibly of the World now and then, which is common enough, but think so too. It was not a Notion they took up in a discontented Humour, and laid aside again when the Fit was over, but it was their standing uniform Judgment, that *all is Vanity*: That Man's chief Happiness lies not on this Side the Grave, but on the other; not in created Goods, but in the Love and Enjoyment of the Creator. *The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul, therefore will I hope in him.** Ah! what are all these Things

* Lament. iii. 24.

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without my God? What is this Earth if I must quit all Claim to my heavenly Country? Might I have the whole World upon these Terms, I would reject it with Indignation. Alas! the World is *little* to me now, when I am dying it will be *less*, and after Death *nothing at all*. Where-ever Providence appointed them the Place of their Habitation, in a more delightful or less agreeable Scene, and whatever were the Circumstances allotted them, they never reckoned themselves at home, never said, *'tis good for us to be here*, never voted for an Immortality upon Earth; *but confessed, that they were Strangers and Pilgrims*. This was not the Language only of the Shepherd, whose Condition had little more Fixedness than a Tent, which is perpetually removed from one Place to another, Gen. xlvii 9. And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, *The Days of the Tears of my Pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty Years, few and evil have the Days of the Tears of my Life been*; but of the King too, Ps. xxxix 10. *I am a Stranger with thee, and a Sojourner as all my Fathers were*. His dwelling in a Palace,
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and they in Tents, made no Difference in this Matter. A Crown had no Charms, a Court no Pleasures (or none but what were low and tasteless) for him, whose Heart panted and breathed after a diviner Felicity, saying, *When shall I come and appear before God? In his Presence is Fulness of Joy, at his right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.* The good Man saith as Job (but not because broken with Sorrows as he was) *I would not live always*: * The wicked Man, let me never die, so I may always live in worldly Ease and Prosperity; so different is the Voice of Faith and Sense, of Grace and Nature!

3. They were not without good Hope of a Part in the promised Reward. To have thought of Heaven, but as a Place which they must not see, or seeing must not enter; of God, but as one who had cast them off for ever; would have been inexpressibly sad and afflicting to Souls that lov'd God as they did, and had set *their Affections on Things above.* But for this very Reason, that they lov'd God

Job vii, 16.

supremely,

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supremely, they could not justly entertain a Suspicion, that they should be eternally banished from his Presence : For this very Reason, that the Supposition of such a Banishment, abstracting from other Considerations, alarmed and terrified them, they might be assured that it would never be their Lot. The *Angels left their own Habitation*, Jude's Epistle, the 6th Verse, τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον, their proper Habitation, for so it was as long as they continued in their Integrity ; the Purity of the Abode suited that of their Nature, which was no sooner corrupted by Sin, but the Place immediately cast them out. It may be said of all holy Souls, that Heaven is, tho' not their native yet, their proper Region, to which therefore they as naturally ascend as a pure and active Flame mounts upward. Upon the same Account as the apostate Spirits were thrown down from these celestial Mansions they shall be received into them, filling up the Room of those fallen Angels, as the *Israelites* did of those Nations, which the Land spew'd out when they had defiled it. So that, you see, a heavenly Hope either actually accom-

accompanies a heavenly Temper, or always ought to do it. Having thus consider'd the Faith of these holy Men, which was the first Thing propos'd; let us enquire

Secondly, What we are to understand by their dying in this Faith: And why may not the Expression intimate these following Things? the Constancy of their Faith; its being a suitable and decent Close of the Life they had led; and that it was their main Support in dying.

1. This Expression of their dying in Faith, may be reasonably suppos'd to denote the Constancy, both of their Faith it self, which vanquish'd all the Temptations that could be thrown in its Way, and of their Profession of it, which held out to the last. They equally abhorr'd Infidelity and Hypocrisy, neither thro' Error falling from the Faith, nor thro' Cowardice basely deserting or disguising or denying it. In them Faith was a lively permanent Principle, which ceased not to exert its Activity till they themselves gave up the Ghost; and then, like those who shall be found alive at the last Day, it did not so properly dye as
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was chang'd, putting on Immortality under another Form and Name; for the Object being present, what was *Faith* before immediately commenced *Sight*. The *Trial of their Faith, being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, tho' it be tried in the Fire, was found unto Praise and Honour, and Glory.* * Of such a Faith as this the House in our Saviour's Parable, that was built on a Rock, is a proper Emblem. *The Rains descended, the Floods came, and the Winds blew and beat upon the House, and yet it fell not, because it was founded on a Rock.* † *The Foundation of God, even his holy Covenant, which he had establish'd with them, standeth sure; and to this he trusted, so that no Storms could shake their Faith, no Floods could quench their Love.* || The Prosperity of wicked Men, and the Afflictions of the Righteous, that Deluge of Impiety which had over-spread the World, and threaten'd its Destruction, while the God of Heaven kept Silence, as if he were retir'd from the Scene of Action, and regarded

* 1 Pet. i. 7. † Matt. vii. 25. || Cant. viii. 7.

not what was done here below. These and such like Riddles, that were fatal to the Faith of many others, were not so to theirs, who took the Matter by the right Handle; and instead of considering these Things as Objections against the Providence of God, and consequently against a future State, improv'd them as very good Arguments for such a State, where God will set the Affairs of his Government in a clearer Light, and effectually vindicate his Perfections and Providence from all Aspersions. A great many Things conspir'd to betray and overthrow their Faith, as the Number of bad Examples which beset them on all Hands, the Prevalency of Error, the Corruption of their own Nature, the Blandishments of Sense, the Insinuations of Company and Acquaintance, the Sophistry of Pretenders to Reason, and the Confidence, the Wit, and Banter of profane Scoffers, walking after their own Lusts, and saying, *Where is the Promise of his Coming? Whoever returned from this invisible World which you talk so much of? Shew us one risen from the dead, and we will believe.* But in vain were all these Mines and Batteries,

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their Faith, after all, standing fix'd and impregnable ; as well it might, when it had not only the Support of their natural Notions concerning a World to come, but also of the Power and Love and Faithfulness of God. They endured to the End, and were saved ; were faithful to the Death, and received a Crown of Life.

2. Their dying in Faith plainly enough hints that their Death was but a suitable and decent Close of the Life they had led ; 'twas all of a Piece, and all regular, and they had before lived by Faith * as they now died in it. Their Death, as the last Act of Life, only finish'd the great Work, and shew'd its Unity and Perfection. This was not the first Time of their putting on this celestial Armor ; they always went clad in it, and, by the Help of it, had been victorious in manifold Encounters. By Faith they pleased God, chearfully complied with the Command to offer up their best lov'd Comforts, chose to suffer Affliction with the People of God, rather than enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, because they had Respect to the Recompence of

* Rom. i. 17.

Reward ;

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Reward ; they subdued Kingdoms, overcame the World, and, which is yet greater, conquer'd their own Lusts and Passions, wrought Righteousness, became Heirs of the Promises, and, in one Word, obtain'd a good Report of Men, if they were not bad indeed, and of the Truth also, which, in the inspired Writings, hath transmitted their shining Examples to the most distant Posterity. Many will say as *Balaam, Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his* : My Death, but not my Life : I would willingly enjoy my sinful Pleasures as long as I can, and then try the Virtue of Faith. And dost thou think, O vain Man ! that the Privilege of dying in Faith is reserved for thee ? Or that the Faith, which thou mayest have when thou comest to leave the World, is the Faith these good Men died in ? O do not thus deceive thyself to thy own Perdition ! True Faith is quite another Thing than thou art apt to conceit it, implying such a Preference of heavenly Things, as 'tis impossible thou shouldest have, after thou hast minded none but earthly ; such a Taste for divine Pleasures, such a Rest and Complacency in

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God, as can never, without a Miracle, be found in Souls, that, for a whole Life together, have wallowed in impure and sensual Delights. Such a Change is not often, if ever, wrought in an Instant. I shall only beg you to consider this farther, that it must be very odd to think of beginning a Life of Faith a Moment or two before you are to conclude it. To add no more

3. Hereby is signified, that Faith was their main Support in dying; being able to make the same Challenge as the Apostle *Paul*, and in his Words (tho' they could not have understood them in the Fulness of their Meaning) *O Death! where is thy Sting? O Grave! where is thy Victory?* And, with Exultation, to add, as he does elsewhere, *I have fought the good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith; henceforth a Crown of Righteousness is laid up for me.* This made it to be no Difficulty for them to leave the World, as *Abraham* his Country and Kindred, having so good a Guide to conduct them; yet not, as he, to wander in unknown Regions, but to enter into everlasting Rest.

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The Shield of Faith will not only quench the fiery Darts of Satan, but repel the Arrows of Death too. Never is the Worth of this Grace so sensibly discern'd, as in the Strength and Peace it communicates to the dying Christian, whom (after it hath enabled him to surmount the Hardships and Trials of Life) it many times elevates above the Fears of Death too; so that he is no more shock'd at its Approach, than by that of any ordinary Event: A Sight much more pleasing to a judicious Mind than a *Roman Triumph* could be! When he is passing thro' the dark Valley and Shadow of Death, Faith, like a Ray from Heaven, enlightens the gloomy Path, and helps him to behold the Hills of Salvation that lie beyond it. We here see the Waters of *Jordan* divided again by Faith, and the Soul march dauntless thro' to take Possession of the promised Reward. *Moses* was called up to *Mount Nebo*, from thence to survey the *Land of Canaan*, and then to die in the Mount, Deut. xxxii. 49, 50. As if, after this Sight, he would die more contentedly. In like Manner, the pious Man beholding with an Eye of Faith the
much

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much fairer Inheritance in Light, calmly resigns himself to the Stroke of Death. *Moses* was to see *Canaan* at a Distance, but never enter it, which would have made this Proceeding look more like a Punishment than a Favour, if his generous and publick Spirit had not given him an Interest in what should befall the People of God in future Ages, and his Faith from the earthly *Canaan* had not raised his Thoughts to the heavenly, into which he knew he should not be denied Admission. O ravishing Prospect! Unfading Light! *Rivers of Pleasure! Mansions of Rest! Crowns of Glory! Bright and angelick Hosts beholding the Almighty's Face, celebrating his Perfections and Works, and surrounding his Throne, from whence he graciously smiles on the adoring Multitude, and in every Smile darts ineffable Joy into their Hearts! This is the Place whither the Spirits of the Just immediately ascend, upon their Release out of this sinful Life! This the Company with which they join! This their Employment and Happiness! And after the Revolution of a few Years (few compar'd to the Ages of Eternity!) each Soul shall*
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resume the Body, of which Death dispos-
sess'd it, free from all its old Infirmities,
array'd in new and surprizing Beauty, and
invested with the utmost Perfection a Bo-
dy is capable of. The Terrors of Death
must flee before this Thought, as the
Shades of the Night before the rising Day:
We may say to such as go about to ad-
minister Consolation upon any other Prin-
ciples, but those of Faith, as *Job* did to
his Friends, *Miserable Comforters are ye
all. Tell me not that to dye is natural
and unavoidable, a Law that all must
submit to sooner or later, whether they
will or no*: A most wonderful Comfort
under the Apprehensions of an impend-
ing Calamity to know that it is inevi-
table! Tell me not that, of all human
Evils, Death is the only one whose Pre-
sence never incommoded any one, and
which makes us uneasy only by its Ab-
sence. This is putting me off with a
Piece of trifling Wit, when I need some-
thing more solid, and exasperates, instead
of healing, a wounded Mind. For upon
Supposition there be another Life after
this, this applauded Thought hath no
Manner of Foundation; the Soul, which
is

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is the only Thing sensible while the Man lives, being no less sensible after Death than before, and the Soul of a wicked Man sensible of nothing but Misery: And tho' Death should be such an Evil as it is here describ'd, 'tis but a thin and sorry Fence this against the Fears of it! The Evils of Life, if they are felt, argue Sense and Perception, which is the Foundation of Happiness; while Death, together with the Sense of it self, if it implies Annihilation, destroys all Capacity of Pleasure or Happiness too. * Tell me not again, that tho' the Time of Life appointed to all be short and irrevocable, yet 'tis in a Man's Power to extend his Memory by virtuous Deeds. If the Poet's God had nothing to offer more consolatory than this, I must say, that his God is not as our God, who only hath Immortality, and, by his well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, hath given us the Words of eternal Life; who does not only encourage us with the Promise that the Just shall be had in everlasting Remembrance, but that they them-

* Stat sua cuique Dies, breve & irreparabile Tempus
Omnibus est Vitæ; sed famam extendere factis
Hoc Virtutis opus. Virgil. *Aeneid.* Lib. 10.

selves

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selves shall live for ever in a State of unconceivable Perfection : And, in Truth, unless I have some rational Assurance of this, that I my self shall have a real, sensible, happy, Existence, it will yield me but little Relief that my Name is likely to be somewhat longer liv'd than this frail Body ; since if it should so happen that I am well spoken of by a few when I am no more, I shall know nothing of it, and be never the better for it, and so can have no Enjoyment of the imaginary Blessing, but by Way of Anticipation. To these, and such like heathenish Methods of encount'ring the Terrors of Death may justly be applied those Words of the Prophet *Isaiah*, *The Covering is narrower than that a Man can wrap himself in it.* Let who will please themselves with talking of a philosophical Death ; may I die like a Christian ! Let them trust to natural Reason and Resolution ; but, O Lord, do thou give me Faith ! Let this Angel comfort me in my dying Agonies, and I matter them not. Faith will prop my languishing Head, dispel the Mists from my clouded Eyes, quicken my feeble Pulse, and re-

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vive my sinking Spirits. The richest Cordial in Nature cannot compare with it. When my Strength and my Heart fails me, this will be the Strength of my Heart, by assuring me, that God will be my Portion for ever. O let me be but strong in Faith when my Body lies weak and helpless, and dying ! As my End approaches let me have brighter Views, and more overflowing Hopes of heavenly Joys, and I defy the worst that Death can do. I am ready to enter the List when God pleaseth, and shall write down my last Day as that whereon I am to triumph.

And now, to make a little Use of what hath been delivered.

1. I infer the singular Excellency of Faith : For, not to mention any other Trial of it, 'tis abundantly enough that it will stand this last and greatest. Let the Infidel bring his vaunted Principles to the Test, and see if they will bear it. Faith may pass for Weakness and Folly among some Men ; but they must give others Leave to think it a Point of the highest Wisdom. Nay, I will undertake to prove it so upon the grand Principle of these Men, That there is no Life to

come.

come. For Argument's sake, I suppose, there is not ; how will the Account then stand between the Believer and the Unbeliever? Why, when they are dead, they will both be upon a Level : But not when they are dying. No, here the Believer hath vastly the Advantage ; for, besides that the other, in spite of all his Endeavours to the contrary, cannot but have some Jealousies of a future Reckoning, which will keep his Mind pensive and anxious ; his best, his only Resort is Annihilation, or the wretched Hope that he shall be no more, that he shall entirely perish ; which is just like a Man's throwing himself into a rapid Flood, from which there is no Possibility of his getting out again, to avoid a cruel Enemy that pursues him ; he chuses Death in this Form only, as less dreadful than falling into such merciless Hands. This is the Condition of the Free-thinker, (as he loves to call himself.) dismal you see, at the best ; while at the worst (I do not mean for the former) the Believer hath the Support of his Faith, which, if it were an Error, is yet sufficient to scatter the Fears of Death. But now, if there be another

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Life, (and we may be as certain of it as of any thing which we cannot see) what then is become of our Boaster? He is miserable by his own Confession; while the Believer, the good Man, is beyond Expression happy, compleatly and eternally happy. And would any one but a most egregious Fool try such a dangerous Experiment, and engage in a Game of Hazard, at which he must stake all against nothing?

2. The Examples of these antient Servants of God should stir us up to an Imitation of their Faith, both living and dying. Their Faith is indeed a great Confirmation of ours, and accordingly this is the Use which this sacred Writer himself makes of what he had said, in the first Verse of the following Chapter; *wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, let us lay aside every Weight, and the Sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with Patience the Race that is set before us.* God hath had his Witnesses in all Ages of the World, in the earlier as well the later, who have born their Testimony to the Wisdom of his Ways, and the Faithfulness

fulness of his Promises, as he also hath testified of their Gifts and Graces, that they were sincere and well pleasing in his Sight. This Testimony of their Lives is a considerable Help to our Faith in these perious Times, and the Testimony of their Death, perhaps, a still greater. Let us do likewise, let us live as they did, that we may die like them. We have the Advantage of them many Ways: We cannot say, that since the Fathers fell asleep, all Things continue as they were. The Messiah, or Christ, is since come, and hath told us all Things, to whom we should look as the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who hath brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel; hath both enlarged our Prospect, and made it more clear and distinct. * *We see Heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right Hand of God, to animate his faithful Combatants, and receive their Spirits when commended into his Hands.* We know, whom we believe, that he is able to to keep what we commit unto him: *He is the Resurrection and the Life.* In the Gospel of Christ, we have most

* John iv. 25. xi. 25. Heb. xii. 2. 2 Tim. x. 12.

express

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express Promises of the heavenly Country, and a kind of a Map or Delineation of it. In the *Blood* of Christ, we have the *Price* of the Inheritance, a Price equal in value to the Possession purchased with it ; insomuch, that be the expected Blessedness never so great, and the Expectant, in his own Apprehensions, and in reality, never so unworthy of it, if he unfeignedly love Christ, he cannot reasonably doubt of his attaining it. In the *Resurrection* and *Ascension* of Christ, we have an *Example* of the Resurrection and Consummation of the Just, *whose vile Bodies he will fashion like to his most glorious Body, by that mighty Power whereby he is able to subdue all Things unto himself.* In the *Spirit* of Christ we have a most inestimable *Pledge* and *Earnest* of the Glory promised. The Church is blessed with larger Effusions of the divine Spirit, and clearer Manifestations of the divine Will : Besides the List of their primitive Saints, we have a new Roll of Christian Heroes, and by a long Succession of excellent Persons, before and since the Gospel, who have exhibited the Truth in their Lives, and sealed it with their dying Breath, and
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sometimes with their Blood, are silently reproached with our Sloth, our Worldliness, our Pusillanimity and Unbelief. O Sirs! let us be ambitious of joining ourselves to this glorious Army, headed by Christ the Captain of our Salvation, and follow their Faith, remembering the End of their Conversation.

Of this Number was your deceased Pastor; he died in Faith, and we have ground to hope, is now inheriting the Promises. The last Words he spake, or aim'd to speak, were those in the Close of the 4th Chapter of the 1 Epist. to the *Thessalonians*, Comfort one another with these Words; namely, *That we sorrow not, even as others who have no Hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him; for this we say unto you, that we that are alive, and remain to the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them that are asleep; for the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Arch-Angel, and with the Trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive*
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and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. A great Disorder of Body made the latter Part of his Life, as less comfortable to himself, so less useful to others, than, I am perswaded, it would otherwise have been. The Soul, let it be never so well disposed, can but badly perform its Part, when the Body hangs upon it like a dead Weight, clouds its Lustre, and impairs its Vigor. I will not say that Charity obliges us to make Allowances in such Cases, since 'tis but a Piece of Justice that we owe worthy Men, to over-look their Decays for the Sake of those good Fruits, which the World and the Church reaped from their Labors and Examples, in their more flourishing Time. His ministerial Qualifications will be acknowledged by those that knew him, and are competent Judges, to have exceeded the common Rate. To good and natural Abilities he had added a considerable Stock of acquired Learning, which he amassed together with unwearied Pains and Diligence; and tho' it may be said that he was covetous in getting Knowledge,

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ledge, (yet contrary to what is observed in other Cases, where Covetousness is a Vice) he was altogether as free in communicating it. His happy Talents for the instructing and forming of Youth committed to his Care, and the Delight he took in this Work, while he could delight much in any Thing, many, I hope, recollect with a grateful Pleasure; his Treasure of scripture Knowledge, out of which, as a Scribe well instructed to the Kingdom of Heaven, he brought forth Things new and old; his serious pathetic and judicious Way of preaching, equally adapted to those of higher and of meaner Capacities; you of this Congregation had too long the Benefit of not to observe; and, give me leave to add, too long to be excusable, if you made no Improvement under them. Among the Virtues of our departed Friend, I cannot forbear making particular Mention of three or four, both because he visibly excelled in them, and they are equally fit to be proposed to the Imitation of all. The Virtues I mean, are the Simplicity and Openness of his Temper, his Contempt of the World, his unenvious, catholick

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and christian Spirit, and his active Zeal in doing Good. These are all most amiable Qualities, (Graces we may call them, when they are the Fruits of Faith, as in this Servant of God;) and, I am sorry to say it, are the more valuable, like some other Things, for being rare. He was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no Guile, without Artifice and Design, both in his Preaching and Conversation, in which, as St. Paul was his Pattern, so he copied him very exactly, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *Our Rejoycing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World.* And in the 4th Chap. of the same Epistle, Verse 2. *We have renounced the hidden Things of Dishonesty, not walking in Craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by Manifestation of the Truth, commending our selves to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of God.* In an intimate Acquaintance of many Years, I cannot call to mind any one Instance that discovered an Inclination in him, to Methods of Tricking and Deceit. If it be objected, that a Man may have

have too much Simplicity for this World; my answer is, better so than have too little for another: He had as hearty, and thorough an Indifference to the World, as most I have known. Did St. *Paul* in his Appeal to the Elders of *Ephesus* publickly declare that he had coveted no Man's Silver or Gold? Our Friend could have done the same, knowing no other Use of Money, than to supply the real Occasions of Life, and to expend in Charity and Beneficence. How free was he from that base, unmanly, unjust, and yet natural, Passion of Envy? Easy to hear others commended, and pleased to have an Occasion of praising them himself? In this, I must confess, I have not often met with his Equal. He was far from confining Christianity to a Party, as the Manner of some is; He had larger and juster Notions of it; and tho' he would call no Man Master upon Earth, he was ever ready to call and account all those his Brethren, that appeared to be embarked in the same common Design of promoting the Gospel of Christ, and saving Souls. This, indeed, seemed to be his chief Delight; he served God with his Spirit in the Gospel of his Son. We have

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have Reason to think that as long as his Health would give leave, he was never better pleased, than when he was about his Master's Business, and imitating that divine Person, who went about doing Good, and made it his Meat to do the Will of him that sent him, and to finish his Work. But, alas! after having for some Time been preparing us for his Loss, God hath at length taken him from us, almost in the Midst of his Days; so that ye, among whom he went preaching the Kingdom of God, and all of us, shall see his Face no more. It remains therefore, that the Things which ye have learned and received, and heard, and seen in him, agreeable to our common Standard of Faith and Practice, ye remember and do; that so, tho' he be dead, and in his Grave, the seed he sowed may not die with him, but spring up, and bring forth Fruit to eternal Life.

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